



TOWN OF WEST HARTFORD

Ad Hoc Subcommittee on Economic Development
Town Hall, 50 South Main Street, Room 312
January 28, 2019
6:00 PM

In attendance: Dallas Dodge, Shari Cantor, Ben Wenograd, Chris Barnes, Beth Kerrigan (on phone), Matt Hart, Mark McGovern and Kristen Gorski.

MINUTES

1. Call to Order: 6:00 pm

The Committee decided to begin with Business Items.

2. Business Items

a. Review of Redevelopment Agency Authority (Attachment)

Mark McGovern presented a powerpoint on Redevelopment Agency authority. Redevelopment Agencies were a very common way for municipalities to address blight and deteriorating conditions in the past. West Hartford had an active Authority in the 1960's and 1970's and worked on projects in the industrial sector in the southeast part of town.

Redevelopment Agencies must determine that a project area meets a statutory definition. They have authority to buy, lease, condemn and sell properties in accordance with prescribed goals and objectives. When plans end, Redevelopment Agency property ownership reverts to the town or city.

The prevalence of Redevelopment Agencies has diminished over the past 20 years with the reduction of federal grants to municipalities.

b. Cottage Food Legislation (Attachment)

Kristen Gorski introduced Jennifer Nelb, a new resident that brought CT's new Cottage Food law to staff's attention. CT Dept. of Consumer Protection now licenses low risk food (candy, baked goods etc.) production within homes but West Hartford zoning ordinances do not permit it within Home Occupation section of the code. Current Home Occupation permitting was discussed with the committee.

Staff reviewed the issue with the Health District. They have no jurisdiction but also did not see it as problematic if the Town allowed cottage food producers.

There was general agreement of the committee that an ordinance to allow cottage food was worthwhile and staff was directed to bring a draft ordinance to the February CPPS meeting. Staff was also directed to look at other allowed or disallowed uses under Home Occupation and including arts and crafts.

3. Staff Reports

a. Community & Economic Development (Attachment)

The 2018 development report that was distributed was reviewed.

Staff identified that experiential retail/indoor amusement demand still exists. The 2017 ordinance permitted this new use in the CBDH zone in Blue Back and Industrial zones only. Staff was directed to bring a draft ordinance back to the February committee meeting for discussion purposes.

The schedule of POCD Update workshops was reviewed. Sessions are scheduled for 1/30, 1/31, 2/6 and 2/7. All are at 6:00 pm in Town Hall.

b. Other

Matt Hart informed the committee that a task force was being established to review and assess Building, Fire and Health permitting. There are opportunities to streamline, digitize and establish a more customer friendly process. Progress will be reported and guidance sought from the committee.

4. Future Agenda Items

In addition the experiential retail ordinance, the next meeting will be a consultant led workshop to review community feedback from the POCD public meetings and solicit Councilor input.

5. Adjournment